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Review of Literature on Indian Christian Theology Published in India During the Past Twenty-Five Years

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In this article we are concerned mainly with literature published in India in the field of Indian Christian theology during the past quarter century, as defined by the title itself; only passing reference may be made to other related pieces of literature. Further, literature published in *The Indian Journal of Theology* is totally excluded from this review, since it is fully dealt with in another article in this symposium.

Our selection and treatment of literature depend basically on our definition of Indian Christian theology. What is meant by Indian Christian Theology? Can we speak of an Indian Christian theology at all, if Christianity is universal and Christian faith is the same for all? The answer lies in our definition of theology itself. Of course, the essential datum of Christian theology should remain unchanged: but it has to be re-interpreted in every changing human situation and historical context in ever new and intelligible categories of thought and language. Hence, theology may be said to be faith seeking to understand and communicate itself in every human situation, adapting itself to new forms of expression, as Aulen puts it, resulting in new formulations of dogmas, as Marcus Ward points out. The Bible contains the most authentic writings communicating the divine revelation in particular historical contexts and human situations, and, hence, constitutes a primary source of reference for Christian theology; but the task of theology is to make it meaningful to contemporary man. This contextual character of theology has as its most important corollary the fact that no theology is valid for all times and for all human situations; it makes theology yield itself not merely to translation into different languages, or conversion of old terminologies into new ones, but also to ever renewing conceptualisation and expressional creativity of theological dynamism. In such a dynamism, the motive is not only to make the universal Christian faith relevant in India today but also to use the Indian religious and cultural insights for the interpretation of the Gospel for universal Christianity.

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Indian Christian theology may, therefore, be defined as theology written for the Indian Church in Indian philosophical categories and religious terminologies by those who, whether professedly Christians or not, with a basic knowledge and experience of Christ and an intimate knowledge of the Indian cultures and thoughts, have tried to interpret the truth of Christ to the people of India as meaningful and relevant to their religious and cultural heritage and development in the context of their individual, social and national life, with a view to making such particular insights ultimately available for universal Christianity.

Where do we find such an Indian Christian theology? No single, comprehensive, systematic treatment deserving such a title has been produced either by any official organ of the Indian Churches or by any individual theologian. But is such a work essential, at any rate, to start the discussion on an Indian Christian theology? The early Church for many centuries did not have such a fully worked out body of doctrines to defend orthodoxy when controversies broke out between the schools of Antioch and Alexandria, for instance, except that the great minds of individuals like Tertullian, Clement and Origen had inspired profound creative theological thinking which awakened the Church to the task of interpreting the truth of the Christian faith to the contemporary world and evolving a Christian spirituality which was integrated with the philosophical and cultural ethos of the peoples listening to the Gospel. A similar phenomenon, in fact, has already been in progress in India, with the exception that no major controversies between organised schools have taken place in the same pattern as in the early Church and no ecumenical council has met to condemn anybody as an heretic. However, the literature produced by individual theologians on Indian Christian theology, according to our definition, is both voluminous and of considerable depth as our review will reveal, and we are persuaded to admit that what may be called Indian Christian theology has already emerged.

Two points of methodology must be declared at the outset. First, the literature on the subject published even in India during the last quarter century, being too extensive for works to be reviewed individually, has to be considered representatively and selectively with regard to types and viewpoints; and secondly, therefore, the contribution of a particular theologian has been discussed in several instances as a corpus of literature, without reviewing each piece separately. Of course, the necessity of selection implies omissions, and in that sense this article has to be far from a complete review.

The Re-Thinking Triad of Madras

At our starting point, in 1950, we find the three towering personalities of the intellectual giants who formed the Re-Thinking Group of Madras—V. Chakkarai, P. Chenchiah, and Bishop A. J. Appasamy. They devoted their lives to the reinterpretation of Christian faith in terms of Indian theology. We will review first their major contributions which fall within the period.

V. Chakkarai lived mostly in the first half of the century, and most of his writings also appeared during that period, and hence fall outside our purview. However, *The Theology of Chakkarai* (CISRS, 1968) by P. T. Thomas has recalled Chakkarai to the present day symposium on Indian Christian theology. Born in a non-Brahmin caste, educated in a Scottish Mission School first and then in the Madras Christian College, Chakkarai was deeply influenced by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His Cross. He accepted Baptism and was one of the founders of the Christo Samaj which worked for the indigenisation of the Indian Church. His stimulating thoughts in *Jesus the Avathar* (1927) and *The Cross and Indian Thought* (1932) and in several articles, especially in the *Christian Patriot*, of which he was the proprietor and editor, have promoted indigenous theology. The central stress of his theology may be represented by the phrase, Pneumatic Christology; he gives more emphasis to the Christ of experience and the metaphysical truth of Christ than to the Jesus of history. His zeal in avoiding Western and Greek terminology and in interpreting the Christian faith in Indian terms has been accepted as one of the basic principles of Indian Christian theology.

P. Chenchiiah (1886-1959). *Theology of Chenchiiah* (CISRS, 1969) by D. A. Thangasamy is a good study of Chenchiiah's thought. Besides, CISRS has published two articles on Chenchiiah's contribution, 'The Significance of Chenchiiah and his Thought' (RS, X/3, 1963) and 'Chenchiiah's Understanding of Jesus Christ' (RS, XI/3, 1964). Chenchiiah's own works fall outside the period under review. The focus of Chenchiiah's theology is the concept of the New Creation and the New Man. Christ, according to him, represents a new stage in the evolution of Man. Those who live according to Yoga of The Spirit will also become Christ-like. Direct experience or *anubhava* is the essential nature of Christian life, which makes the believer a New Creation in union with Christ who is the New Man, and the entire life of the believer then becomes the Yoga of The Spirit. The influence of the Integral Yoga of Aurobindo and the practical religion of CVV on Chenchiiah is obvious, and one cannot lose sight of the resemblance of thought between Chenchiiah and Teilhard de Chardin.

A. J. Appasamy (1891-1975). Bishop Appasamy, who died very recently, has made unique contributions to the Indian Church.¹ *A Bishop's Story* (1970), which is his autobiography, gives much insight into his personality and spirituality. It is the enlargement of a brief autobiography he wrote in 1964 under the title *My Theological Quest*. Appasamy is the Indian Christian theologian who identified himself with the *bhakti* tradition of India unreservedly. His *Sundar Singh: A Biography* (1958) brings out how Sundar Singh, though unschooled technically in theology, was able to influence the minds of Indian Christians and non-Christians and even Westerners by his life as a *bhakta*. His appreciation of A. H. Krishna Pillai (1827-1900), under the title *Tamil Christian*

¹ *The Chronicle* of Bishop's College, Calcutta, 1975, has paid glowing tribute to Appasamy's venerable memory and appreciated his contribution.

Poet (1966), has brought to light the theological influence of the *bhakti* poems on Indian Christians. He especially points out how Krishna Pillai describes God as *Saccitananda* and not as *Trimurti*, hails the motherhood of God, and describes salvation as the rescue of a drowning man by a rescuer (swimmer), and he draws the conclusion that it was those in the *bhakti marga* who were capable of expressing Indian Christianity through their poetic and figurative language.

Appasamy leans philosophically towards the school of Ramanuja, which he finds more congenial to Christian *bhakti marga* than other Indian schools of philosophy. He rejects the Chalcedonian Christology and holds that Christ's oneness with the Father is of a moral character and that advaitic monism is not at all helpful for understanding its nature. *Moksa* is the faith-union of the believer with Christ; it is realised here and now. *Antaryamin* is the universal presence as well as the indwelling presence in the believer of Christ, and hence is a term that can contain the logos concept as well as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Rejection of the *karma samsara* doctrine is no help to the Hindu; what he needs is a solution to the problem of sin. *Yoga* of the spirit frees the believer from *karma* and unites him with God through Christ. The moral effect of the love of God expressed on the Cross leads to the self-identification of the *bhakta* with Christ.

Appasamy's attitude to the institutional Church is much more positive than that of the other members of the trio, even of most other Indian theologians. The sacramental principle, as represented best in the Eucharist by the use of the 'body' and 'blood', is that the physical body is not evil but meant to serve as the visible vehicle of the *antaryamin*, a principle found in the Upanishads also (e.g. Trait. Up., 3.2 cited in *Bhaktimarga*, p. 132), but supremely revealed in the unique *avatara* of Christ. God chose the human body of Jesus as his 'second body', in which to dwell as *antaryamin*, the 'first body' being the world itself, a truth expounded by the 'soul-body' analogy of Ramanuja, which is more intelligible to the Indian mind than the Chalcedonian definition. However, this should not be confused with the pantheistic conception that the world and *Brahman* are identical, one and the same. God is present in the universe actively, which is signified by the concept of *antaryamin*. By faith-union with Christ the *bhakta* also becomes the dwelling place of God. Similarly, the Church is the body of Christ in which God dwells as *antaryamin*, despite all its infirmities as a human body, human institution; it is the foretaste of the eschatological reality of the perfecting of the whole Creation, the transformation of the world into the perfect Body of God.

P. D. Devanandan's Writings (b. 1901-d. 1962)

The major works of Devanandan published in India during the period under review are: *Our Task Today* (CISRS, 1959), *The Christian Concern in Hinduism* (CISRS, 1961), *I Will Lift up Mine Eyes unto the Hills: Sermons and Bible Studies* (CISRS, 1963), *Preparation for Dialogue* (CISRS, 1964), and *Presenting Christ to India Today* (CISRS, 1965). His most basic work, *The Concept of Maya*, which

was his doctoral thesis submitted at Yale in 1925 and published in London in 1950, falls outside our list as not published in India. The CISRS published *In Memory of Devanandan* (1962) which adds substantially to the insights provided by his own work, *I Will Lift up Mine Eyes unto the Hills*, into his personality, spirituality and theology.

With Devanandan a new era dawned in the history of Indian Christian theology. His special interest was in sociology and comparative religion rather than in systematic and dogmatic theology. But from that point of view he took Indian theology forward to the task of relating the secular state with contemporary Hinduism. He himself felt the call to make a sympathetic study of man and society in modern India with a view to understanding the people of other faiths from their own point of view and helping them to understand themselves in relation to, or in the context of, the changing pattern of life. In his *Our Task Today*, quoting from K. M. Panikkar's *Hinduism at the Cross Roads*, Devanandan supports the thesis of the latter that Hinduism can be restored to its effectiveness only by emphasising the social character of its institutions, rethinking its social values, reorganising its traditional structure, and divorcing the law from customs and religious ordinances, and he holds that it is the task of the Christian Mission to bring into Hinduism the right view of history, of creation, of personality and community, for which the Hindu is searching, especially in a situation which demands the reconciliation of orthodoxy with the developing life of a modern secular state. By understanding the inner working of Hinduism the Christian theologian may be able to show his Hindu friends that Hinduism can find its true meaning only in Christ.

In his *Preparation for Dialogue* Devanandan has made a twofold contribution. First he has worked out a theory of *community*. In doing so he rejected the concept of *karmasamsara* which inevitably led to individualism and fatalism, and affirmed that man becomes genuinely person (*purusa*) only as *bhakta* in *satsangha*, an idea the Christian mission should take up to emphasise the *koönomia* which would transform community. Here is the unique place of the Church which has its centre in Christ who is the source of the transforming power. Secondly, as already mentioned, Devanandan finds that the renaissance Hindu, wrestling with the problem of finding a theological basis for the affirmation of society for which traditional orthodoxy with the concepts of *karmasamsara* and *maya* is helpless and seeking for a resolution of the conflict between the traditional world view and contemporary secularism, is in utter need of the incarnation, which Christianity alone can point to. This is the relevance of Christian-Hindu dialogue in which Indian terminology and categories of thought, which will help the Hindus in self-expression and reception, are used.

Literature Emerging from the Church Union Movements and Events

The theological significance of the literature that has emerged from Church union movements and events and which was published during

the period under consideration is not negligible, though limited. Let us review a few examples.

Bengt Sundkler's *CSI: The Movement towards Union, 1900-1947* (London, 1954) gives the significance of the event of the formation of the CSI and the long theological discussions which led up to it. Published outside India, the book falls outside our review. Similarly M. Ward's *The Pilgrim Church* was published in London (1953); it is worth mentioning that the book appreciates the attitude of the pioneers in avoiding detailed confessional statements in Western terminology for the united Church and for providing only a few general principles on the basis of which the Indian Church may draw up a more Indian confession in Indian categories of thought. Certainly the influence of Indian Christian theologians like P. Chenchiah and Bishop A. J. Appasamy was behind this attitude of the pioneers of Church union.

Rajaiah D. Paul's *The First Decade* (CLS, Madras, 1958) reflects the same vein of thought. The Governing Principles of the CSI as stated in the *CSI Constitution* includes the remarkable statement that the Church desires, 'conserving all that is of spiritual value in its Indian heritage, to express under Indian conditions and in Indian forms the spirit, the thought and the life of the Church universal.' T. S. Garrett's *Worship in the CSI* (second ed., 1965) brings out the interesting truth that worship is the area in which a comparatively higher degree of indigenisation is anticipated. The 'Kiss of Peace' adopted from the Eucharistic liturgical tradition of the Syrian Christians in Kerala, the permission, or rather the encouragement, given for the use of the *Tali* which is the *Mangalya sutra* in the Indian cultural tradition of the wedding ritual, and the inclusion of a blessing in the suffrage of the order of Baptism, 'From darkness lead them to light; from death lead them to everlasting life', which reflects the Upanishadic words (Br. ar. Up., 1.3.28), are of course gestures which may help to create an indigenous atmosphere of worship rather than pointing to a theology of worship.

The CNI has not produced any official document in this line. But the history of and the attitudes expressed in the Church union discussions are very much in favour of indigenous theology and worship. It is understood that the CNI is preparing the way for the production of such theological statements and liturgical forms as would make the Church more and more Indian.

The Indian Journal of Theology

Another forum where literature on Indian Christian theology has appeared is the professional periodicals, of which *The Indian Journal of Theology* and *Religion and Society* are the most important. *The Indian Journal of Theology* provides a valuable forum for the publication of theological writing, and has been constantly encouraging Indian theological thinking, though criticism can be raised that in recent years the field has been occupied mainly by Western writers. As there is another paper reviewing the literature published by *IJT* we shall not attempt an analytical review of it.

The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and the Religion and Society Quarterly Magazine

The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, founded in 1957 and directed first by Dr P. D. Devanandan and then by Dr M. M. Thomas, has taken a more radical approach and become a more established institution. The major books published by it on Indian Christian theology have been selectively reviewed by the way in this paper. Their quarterly publication *Religion and Society* has been the most important forum for the Indian theologian, and the relevant articles published in this journal during the past are numerous but too important to be ignored altogether. In this paper we can afford to make a general comment on the nature and the main theological emphasis of the publication. Most of these articles will anyhow be reviewed by another paper in this symposium, the paper on 'Literature on Social Questions'.

The distinctive character of CISRS is undoubtedly its central emphasis on the relation between religion and society and the conscious emphasis it hence gives to cultural, social and political questions. Are these questions outside the scope of Indian Christian theology? No. The separation of the topic of 'Social Questions' should not be on that basis. The movement represented by CISRS ought to be considered as an integral part of the development of Indian Christian theology. Consideration of mere traditional Hindu Spirituality and attempts to formulate Christian dogmas in terms of Indian religious and philosophical categories will not make an adequate indigenous theology. The distinctive emphasis brought in by CISRS, headed by Dr M. M. Thomas who advocates a theology much more closely related to modern, secular India and to the world of Asian revolution, should be taken seriously in any attempt at an Indian Christian Theology. For Christian mission becomes relevant only if it takes into consideration the problems and questions involved in all levels of human existence. This awareness of CISRS is echoed in the Editorial to the April 1961 issue of *Religion and Society*:

The call to Christians to be partners with others in a common struggle for justice is also a call to help interpret the true meaning and direction of that common struggle in the light of the final redemption and fulfilment in Christ. This is not extraneous to our service to society. It is integral to it. It may be our distinctive contribution to make society truly human. . . . As the human is related to the divine, the social and cultural realms of human existence are shot through with what Tillich calls the 'ultimate concern' which finds expression both in the secularist protest against, and in the renaissance of, religions. There is need for Christians in India to participate at this level of the quest of modern India for the religious foundations of the new life, by entering into dialogue with the adherent of secularist and renaissance Hinduism, on the ultimate nature and destiny of man and society. In fact, the freedom and co-existence the

Secular State provides to all religions is not an end in itself; it has meaning only if it is used as a means of furthering such a creative dialogue among the living religions of our country (RS, Editorial, VIII/1, April, 1961, p. 37).

The cited passage makes it explicitly clear that CISRS is deeply interested in the study of religions and of Christian theology from the point of view of the Church's mission and not merely in the study of sociology divorced from religion. The Christocentricity of the 'humanist theology' of CISRS is evident on every editorial page of *Religion and Society*.

Moreover, the major emphasis on political and social questions has not led CISRS to indifference to metaphysical ones as is clearly stated in another passage:

This is no reason for Christians to be indifferent to metaphysics. In the context of India's strong tradition of religious philosophies in which the impersonal and the non-historical conceptions of truth are pronounced, Christians should be prepared to grapple with the problems of philosophical truth, and its relation to personality and history; it is there that they shall be able to show the relevance of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ to the problem of philosophy as to other problems of man (RS, Editorial, VIII/1, April, 1961).

Literature Contributed By Dr M. M. Thomas

This may be an appropriate point to include the two books written by Dr M. M. Thomas published in India during the period under review, *Salvation and Humanisation* (Bangalore, 1971), and the *Realisation of the Cross* (Madras, 1972). Three other major works of his have been published in London during the period under consideration: *Christianity in the World of Struggle* (London, 1951), *The Christian Response to the Asian Revolution* (SCM, London, 1966), and *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (SCM, London, 1969).

Dr Thomas pioneers a distinctive approach in Indian Christian theology, which holds that it should take into consideration not only traditional orthodox Hinduism but, even more, the Hindu of the Indian Renaissance and relate rather to modern secular India. He speaks of three levels at which the dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity should be carried on. The first is the study of the contribution of each faith to man and society, that is a secular conversation which will lead to the possibility of a common culture based on a common humanity. The second is to come to grips with the central theological issues of each faith. The third is the dialogue in the interior, or in the 'cave of the heart', to use the idiom of Abhishiktananda. In the cave of his heart he cherished the idea, which is a unique contribution to Indian Christian theology, that Christ who is already at work in the renaissance Hinduism of modern India will be manifested in the process of humanisation, which is inherent in the Gospel of Salvation in Christ; the Cross

is to be realised in the moral regeneration of the individual and corporate life of man in contemporary India by means of *Karma yoga*, governed not merely by the principle of *niskama karma*, but by the very principle of the self-sacrificial love manifested on the Cross and accepted to a large extent in the Gandhian *satyagraha*.

The article and editorials M. M. Thomas has published in *RS*, *The Guardian* and other journals are too many to be reviewed individually in this paper. What we have done is only to make a general comment as already made in connection with the CISRS.

Some More Contemporary Theologians

Independent India has produced quite a number of theologians who have dealt with some aspect or other of Indian Christian theology, from whom we select a few with outstanding points of view, for our review.

Sujit Singh's *Preface to Personality: Christology in Relation to Radhakrishnan's Philosophy* (Madras, 1952) is perhaps the most comprehensive attempt by an Indian theologian to work out a Christian doctrine of personality. Through his critical study of Radhakrishnan's Neo-Vedic view that God is ultimately the impersonal absolute, the *Brahman* with whom the human soul, *atman*, is identical, though man has a separate individuality, Singh seeks to establish the ultimacy of the soul-body reality of man, which signifies the whole personality, after the pattern of the resurrected Christ. He feels that an adequate doctrine of the reciprocal implication of God and the world, which is fundamental in Christianity, based on the God-man Christ, is the necessary basis of Hindu-Christian Dialogue.

Dhanjibhai Fakkirbhai's *Kristopanishad* (CISRS, 1965) and *The Philosophy of Love* (ISPCK, Delhi, 1966) are valuable additions to the literature on Indian Christian theology. There is an interesting review of *The Philosophy of Love* entitled 'The Christian approach to the Hindu through Literature', by R. M. Clark in *IJT/4* (1963) based on the original Gujarati version. Like *Kristopanishad* it has also appeared in English. The predominant note of D. Fakkirbhai's theology is that God can best be described as *prema* (Love), which includes the idea of *Saccitananda* also, because *prema* includes or rather transcends all other categories, even the concept of *Nirguna Brahma*. Creation is not *maya* in the sense of illusion but is God's act of love; estrangement from God's love is sin; and salvation is restoration to love. The true Christian way, therefore, is the all inclusive *yoga of love*, which transcends the three *marga* of Hinduism—*karma-bhakti-jnana-marga*—and may rightly be called *prema marga* which absorbs into it all the three *marga*, making them the way of action through love, the way of devotion through love, and the way of knowledge through love, respectively.

Paul Sudhakar, an influential evangelist and a learned Hindu convert, is to be mentioned here not because he has produced any outstanding theological literature but because of a distinctive emphasis he has brought into Indian Christian thinking, which has been brought to the

level of literature by an article titled 'Paul Sudhakar' in *Aikya*, the magazine of the SCM of India, published in September 1964. He stresses that Christ is not merely the fulfilment but the very 'answer to Hinduism' and the evangelical tradition which has been all the time preaching the Christ of history should be able to see also the Christ beyond and behind history in the non-Jewish religions prior to the Christian era and the thirst for Christ behind history in this light. In his pamphlet *The Fourfold Ideas* (published by the Gospel Literature Service, Bombay, n.d.), Sudhakar puts forth a fourfold conception of *moksa* as *salokya*, *samipyra*, *sarupya*, *sayujya*. Adam, created in the image of God, possessed the fourfold *moksa* but also lost it in the Fall; Christ came to restore man to it by making available to him *samipyra* in the Cross which is the meeting place of God and man. Sudhakar holds that indigenous theology is a necessity for the proper fulfilment of the evangelistic task of the Church.

Fr Jules Monchanin, French by birth, spent the later part of his life in India leading the life of an Indian *sanyasi* and contributing to Indian Christian theological thinking, and his life and spirituality has been brought out in the piece of literature *Swami Parama Arubi Anandam*, a memorial published in Tiruchirapalli (1959). Carrying forward the work of Upadhyay, Monchanin affirms that Christian doctrine can solve many of the antinomies which have been often noted in Hindu thought. In *Saccitananda* he discerns a reconciliation of the one and the many, monism and pluralism, the personal and impersonal, *Isvara* and *Brahman*. The task of Indian Christian theology is to fill the *Saccitananda* category with the richness of meaning which is lacking in Hinduism:

For us God is neither the impersonal nor the unimpersonal. In his intimate life he is three persons We believe that it is not despite his Trinity but in every consequence of this Trinity that God is one. He is *Sat*, He is *Cit*, He is *Ananda*—Being, Consciousness, Bliss—in such a manner that he constitutes three centres of personality, each one polarised by the other two. The Trinity resolves itself in Unity without becoming less and the Unity expands itself in Trinity without becoming more.

The personal union which the Christian seeks is different from *bhakti* mysticism; it is union with the highest, with *Nirguna Brahman*. Yet such union must share in the tri-personal inner colloquy of *Saccitananda*. India with its *Saccitananda* concept is the most suitable place for this Trinitarian mysticism.

Fr Raymond Panikkar is an outstanding person among contemporary Indian theologians. Born to a Hindu father and a Spanish Roman Catholic mother, he was brought up in an environment of both Christianity and Hinduism. He was first educated in the West; in recent years he has been living in Benares. He is well known in ecumenical circles and his contribution to Indian Christian theology is of very high value.

The best known work of Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964), was published in London, and hence falls outside our purview. The one published in India, *The Trinity and World Religions* (CLS, Madras, 1970), is sufficient to indicate his approach to Indian theology. The book is more of a meditation than a study, mystical than analytical philosophy. He tries to link Trinity with the deep inner spiritual experience of Hinduism. He rejects the *Saccitananda* concept as unhelpful for the understanding of the Trinity, but builds up a triple schema of *karma-bhakti-jnana-marga*, relating them to the special spiritualities of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, respectively.

Karma marga represents the devotion to the tendency to create icons for the invisible God of the Old Testament. *Bhakti marga* represents the devotion to the Son, who alone is properly personal God, *Iswara*, who is described in many ways in different religions—Principle, Being, Logos, and so on—but is fully revealed in Jesus Christ alone and is manifest to us through the Christian Church which is His Body. He is the visibility of the Invisible, as Irenaeus puts it. Love is the response to the person of Christ. *Jnana marga*, the way of non-dualism, *advaita*, is linked with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, God beyond personality, God immanent, who can be known only by realisation. He is at the deepest level of Divinity, the *Atman*, the ultimate ground, who is *Brahman*. The spirituality of *Jnana marga* is therefore silence, not dialogue with God; it is self-abandonment, union.

Panikkar believes that the *kairos*, the time of crisis, has come when all faiths should be brought under Christ who alone is the focus. His attempt to avoid the orthodox Christian terminology and even the Hindu orthodox term of *Saccitananda* and to reinterpret the Trinity in terms of the threefold *marga*, liberating, thereby, the Trinitarian doctrine from metaphysical interpretation in terms of a static ontology and transforming it into a moral experience, is an unparalleled contribution to the development of Indian Christian theology.

Murray Roger's article, 'Hindu and Christian—A Moment Breaks', which appeared in *Religion and Society* (XII/1, 1965), marks the outbreak of a new momentum in Indian Christian theology by pointing out the distinctiveness of the method of dialogue from the three classical approaches of the past, namely, first, the polemical attitude and approach of the early missionaries as typically evidenced in the vehement polemics of Nehemiah Goreh; secondly, the neutralist attitude of the great Western ideologists like Max Mueller, and thirdly, the syncretistic approach as evidenced in the writings of Toynbee and Radhakrishnan. The dialogue approach, in contrast with the classical approaches, is marked by a readiness and willingness to listen to the other partner in the dialogue with an open mind and without prejudice and prejudgement, to accept the non-Christian brother as the image of God and as being drawn to God in Christ, and to wait for the working of the Spirit for the revealing of the hidden Christ in himself.

The Concept of Fulfilment Revived

The idea that Christianity is the crown and fulfilment of Hinduism and other faiths has been an important trend in Hindu-Christian dialogue. It was predominant between Edinburgh 1910 and Tambaram 1938, and was promoted by the Farquharian position as represented by his *The Crown of Hinduism* (London OUP, 1913), but dimmed by Kraemer's attack as found in his book *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (London, Edinburgh House Press, 1938). In more recent years the idea reappeared in the writings of Fr J. Monchanin whose contribution has already been reviewed.

The idea has regained its full momentum in the works of Swami Abhishiktananda (1910-1973), of which *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point within the Cave of the Heart* (Bombay, 1969) is to be mentioned especially. His idea of fulfilment is different from that of Farquhar in that he discerns higher and deeper values in Hinduism than Farquhar did. *Saccitananda Brahman* is for him the highest form of Hinduism (cf. Upadhyay and Monchanin). He sees the value of Hinduism in the context of the eschatological fulfilment in the heart of the *pleroma* (*Cave*, p. 3), and the role of the Christian theologian is to bring this potentiality into fruition.

K. M. Bannerjea had already prophesied this in the latter half of the nineteenth century. His contribution has been brought to new light recently by K. Baago's *Pioneers of Indigenous Theology* (Madras, 1966). He holds that Vedic Hinduism is a parallel to the Old Testament Judaism and that both are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Therefore the task of the Christian theologian is to help the Hindu to rediscover the Messianic prophecies and prefigurations of Christ in the Vedic religions. Bannerjea was, perhaps, the only person of his time to make such a radical and sensational approach in Indian Christian theological thinking.

A. G. Hogg, who was in Madras Christian College till 1954, was a more acute mind who understood Hinduism at a deeper level than Farquhar did, and his volume, *Karma and Redemption* (CLS, first published in Madras, 1970) is critical of the half-hearted sympathy of Farquhar for Hinduism. Dr M. M. Thomas in his review of the book in *RS*, XIII/1 (March, 1971) has appreciated Hogg's position. Hogg in his work, which he considers an essay toward the interpretation of Hinduism and the restatement of Christianity, has made a bold attempt to modify *karma* so as to contain Christian redemption. He justifies this on the basis of his theology of religion from the Christian point of view, which has its New Testament basis in Paul's discerning of the incomplete revelation in other religions as a preparation for the perfect revelation in Christ, and the thesis of the Epistle to the Hebrews that the perfect revelation belongs to the supersensible realm. He thinks it is necessary to extend this to the non-Jewish religions like Hinduism; and this takes him to the position that the Hindu concept of *karma* can be freed from its adherence to the principle of a mechanical chain of cause and effect which holds the individual in isolation responsible for all that he experiences and as incapable from the chain, and

that it can be filled with the Christian revelation of the Cross, the self-sacrificial redemptive suffering, as the way out of the *karma samsara* chain. For mere denial of the *karma* doctrine will not help the Hindu out from the burden of sin but a new understanding of the possibility of release from it will help him. Thus the Hindu categories of *karma* and *maya* are not only very useful for the communication of the Gospel, but even a preparation for the Christian message.

The most remarkable observation to be made in this context is that in later years, after Hogg first wrote, the *karma* concept has evolved in the direction indicated by Hogg as a result of the life example of Mahatma Gandhi, Ramakrishna and others. This supports all the more the contention that the way towards an Indian Christian theology is not merely to re-state the traditional Christian dogmas in Indian terminology but to help the evolution of the theological understanding of the Hindu himself on the basis of his own Scriptures and doctrines by facilitating reinterpretation and rethinking for the Hindu of his own faith.

K. Klostermaier's follow-up of Panikkar's Trinitarian construction on the three *marga* appeared in his *Khristavidya: A Sketch of an Indian Christian Theology* (CISRS, Bangalore, 1967). In this work Klostermaier tries to give the meaning of Christ in the terms and categories of Hindu religion, which he regards as the task of Indian Christian theology.

Christ is the living relationship of every human being within the ultimate. The three *marga* are considered helpful for the Indian understanding of Christianity (cf. Panikkar and Abhishiktananda). However, *jnana marga* is the superior way. *Sabda* in Hinduism is the parallel concept to *Logos* in Greek philosophy and is hence equally useful as a Christological category. In the *karma marga*, *sabda* is the Vedic *mantra* and is related to *akriti*, uncreated idea, which in itself is incomprehensible, and the Upanishads also speak in terms of *sabda Brahman*. If Christ is described as *Iswar ke Putra*, the Hindus will misunderstand it to be a lower type of existence in the *maya* realm. *Khristavidya*, therefore, must be at the level of *Brahma Vidya*, because Christ is unique as *Brahman* is. *Pratyaksa* (i.e., face to face encounter), *anumana* (interference), and *upamana* (analogy) cannot be the ultimate *pramana* of *Khristavidya* but *Sabda* (the Word) is identical with *Brahman* and is adequate to represent the truth of Christ (cf. Appasamy's use of *sruti*). The fivefold procession of *Iswara*—*para*, *vyuha*, *vibhava*, *antaryamin*, and *arcavatara*—are, however, useful to describe the divine activities, namely, the generation of the Son from the Father, proceeding of the Spirit, the divine mission of the Logos, the real presence of God in man through faith and sacraments, and the Eucharistic presence, respectively.

Klostermaier grapples with the problem of monism and dualism which recurs in Indian theology, a dichotomy which no one has ever solved, not even Klostermaier himself. He draws a distinction at the *adhyatmic* Christ, or the spiritual reality of Christ, to which *Khristavidya* should belong; the *adhyatmic* Christ is not outside *Brahman* and *Khristavidya* is not different from *Brahma Vidya*, and hence *jnana marga*.

Klostermaier has not resolved the dichotomy but has only adopted from the various schools of Indian theology concepts such as *maya* of Brahmabandhab, the soul-body analysis of Ramanuja, and Devanandan's reinterpretation of *maya* to include the reality of the material world. He finds good things in *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana*, and appreciates the principle of *advaita*.

Search for the Shape of Indian Christian Theology, and the Contribution of Robin Boyd

We will start with the point at which we departed in the previous section on Klostermaier. Boyd in his volume, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* (first published in 1969, and the second edition in 1975, Madras) ventures to suggest a solution to the never-solved problem of the *Brahman-non-Brahman* dichotomy of Hinduism which has challenged every theologian in the field of Indian Christian theology. He takes up the dichotomy where the German theologian, Klostermaier, left it and seeks a solution in the Pauline distinctions such as spirit and flesh, the transitory world and the eternal world, the outer man and the inner man, citizenship of this world and citizenship of heaven, works and faith, and so on.

Boyd thinks that Devanandan's interpretation of *maya* is especially helpful for the transference of the Christian distinction to the Hindu and hence for the formulation of Indian Christian theology. *Maya* is to be understood not in the realm of theology, but in the moral realm of will and purpose, in the existential sphere. It is sin which keeps us from union with God who is the *Parabrahman*, and the whole creation is, as St Paul says, subject to vanity or frustration or *maya* (Rom. 8:2) and is groaning and waiting for the reappearance of the sons of God, or 'waiting for God to set our whole body free' (vv. 22, 23 NEB). St Paul goes on to say that, with the Holy Spirit aiding us, we will grow into Christ-likeness and will finally unite with him, from whose love nothing can separate us. Based on this Pauline insight and taking into consideration that the 'dichotomy' of *Brahman-non-Brahman* in the Hindu *advaita* is only apparent, we may, Boyd thinks, be able to move to a congenial synthesis of the basic problem in Indian Christian theology.

Robin Boyd is one who has put his heart and soul into the study of the possibilities of an Indian Christian theology, and the anthology of the Indian Christian theologians he has given in his work cited above, with the insights of his own genius evident here and there, remains an unparalleled and pioneering work in the field. A few months ago, a second edition of the book came out, in which he has rectified the omissions and added more insights. Grappling with the problem of diversity and lack of systematisation in Indian Christian theology, he observes that it is not a defect, but must be the distinctive characteristic feature. For a traditional way of systematisation and dogmatisation may be bad for Indian Christianity; the various situations and perspectives are possible to and should be assimilated in an existential whole, which is not an intellectual manual but a spirituality which can comprehend diversity.

The question is again raised here in closing: Has Indian Christian theology emerged? The answer is 'Yes'. We have a multitude of Indian Christian theologians around us with a large bulk of a *corpus theologicum*. Why should we wait for an Origen or an Augustine or a Thomas Aquinas at all? Nevertheless, Indian Christian theology has yet to undergo further development towards its distinctive shape. Diversity is a present reality that is quite evident, but comprehension into a total spirituality is yet to be achieved along with continuing development. In trying to achieve this goal, two important dimensions should not be neglected. First, the dialogue with the West must continue. It must be remarked that an Indian Christian theology cannot be anti-occidental. While copying, whether true or distorted, of the West is unhealthy, dialogue with the West is indispensable for the healthy growth of the Indian Church. What is desirable is not imitation nor limitation but interaction on mutual bases. This leads us to the second dimension that we must start multi-lateral dialogue with other religions and cultures, not only within India but also in all the Afro-Asian countries, lest indigenisation should isolate us from the sharing of the richness of the Church all the world over (cf. D. T. Niles, *Upon the Earth*, 1962). Unless and until this new phase of development in theological discourse appears, we cannot be contented that the Indian Christian theology for our time has fully emerged.